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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Since the endorsement of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women by the General Assembly in its resolution 40/108 of 13 December 1985, the Secretary-General has annually presented a report to the Assembly on the implementation of the Strategies. In its resolution 47/95 of 16 December 1992, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session on measures taken to implement the provisions of the resolution.

2. The present report has been prepared on the basis of contributions from and in consultation with the organizations of the United Nations system.

II. PRIORITY THEMES TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AT ITS THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION

A. Equality: equal pay for work of equal value, including methodologies for measurement of pay inequities and work in the informal sector

3. The first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1990 emphasized the importance of equal pay for work of equal value, including methodologies for measurement of pay inequities and work in the informal sector. In recommendation V, arising from the first review and contained in paragraph 5 of the annex to its resolution 1990/15, the Economic and Social Council stated that Governments and/or appropriate parties ... should renew their efforts to close the gap between women's and men's pay, possibly by 1995, and take special measures to address the principle of equal pay for work of equal value. ... The United Nations system should complete work on methodological aspects of measuring pay inequities between women and men ...

4. Many international instruments, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Assembly resolution 34/180, annex), have paid tribute to the principle of equal remuneration. The multiple and complex links with the position and status of women and men more generally in employment and society have been underlined. Specific international instruments dealing with this issue include the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and Recommendation, 1951 (No. 90), which envisage a number of concrete measures to be taken to promote, ensure, encourage or facilitate the application of the principle of equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value. A large number of countries have adopted legislation that embodies this principle.

5. The pattern of unequal remuneration is universal, although the level of inequality varies from place to place. On aggregate in every country women earn less than men. In addition, men are more likely to have regular full-time work and receive promotions, have greater seniority and other benefits. For example, in Cyprus, Japan and the Republic of Korea women's wages are about half those of men, constituting the lowest among those countries for which data are available. Many countries report that women's remuneration falls below 75 per cent that of

men and only a few countries report that women's remuneration is between 75 and 92 per cent of men's. For Latin America and Caribbean no data are available.

6. A major difficulty in achieving equal pay for work of equal value is in the comparison of the value of jobs performed by men and women. In order to compare the value of different jobs, methods and procedures are needed to ensure that the criterion of sex is not directly or indirectly taken into account in the comparison. Particular difficulties for job evaluation are experienced in areas where men and women are in practice segregated into different types of occupations or production lines and assigned to specific jobs within enterprises. This is the result of strongly entrenched historical and social attitudes. In general, women are predominantly employed in jobs that pay less than those held primarily by men, despite the fact that equal pay is a recognized right.

7. Existing statistics about wage differentials, which are largely expressed as aggregate averages at both occupational and sector level, combine two problems into a single indicator. The position of women in the labour force as a whole is reflected in the indicator because of their predominance in low-skilled jobs and their absence from management and high-status, high-salary professions. Secondly, in occupations that have a high proportion of women workers, pay is relatively lower than for equivalent jobs occupied by men. Lack of statistical information makes it difficult for remedial policies to be formulated and implemented.

8. While the roots of each problem lie in historic patterns of discrimination, the forms of discrimination, as well as the remedies for it, are different. Access to education and employment can be ensured through appropriate legislation, including policies of positive or affirmative action, which should assure equality of opportunity at the entry level. With regard to the second problem, which is derived from job segregation, application of a policy of comparable worth may be advisable. Comparable worth is "the principle that jobs dissimilar in nature can be compared in terms of knowledge, skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions, and that jobs equivalent in value in these terms should be paid equally". Men and women might not do the same job, but if their work is similarly demanding and valuable, they ought to have similar rewards. The policy of comparable worth raises the difficult issue of defining a job's value, which relies mostly on modified job evaluation systems as the basic tool of implementation.

9. The problem of comparable worth goes beyond the framework of employment. It raises questions about the nature of work and the value attached to it. It includes consideration of the relative value of productive and reproductive activities, raises questions about occupational choices that are more problematic for women and requires regular dissemination of information about employment opportunities.

10. Implementation of a policy of comparable worth raises a number of complex methodological issues with regard to the tools of implementation and the legal framework. For example, it is not always clear how job evaluation schemes should be implemented so that they do not embody socially based gender biases. Practical limitations exist in using laws to reduce pay differentials in the

private sector since legal settlements may differ from market-determined wage rates. The definitions given to male- or female-dominated occupations may not be comparable. It is not always easy to extend coverage to smaller enterprises. Similarly, the ease by which workers could press their cases is a practical matter to consider, especially where legal systems involve complex or time-consuming procedures.

11. There is a linkage between the devaluation of women's historic responsibilities within the family, the sex segregation of the labour force and the low pay women receive. The premise is not that women are different, but rather that they have been treated differently. The cultural devaluation of women is itself imbedded in the structure of the labour market. The comparable worth approach proposes a reordering of the ways women and the work associated with them have been valued by the society. It challenges both a purely market-based definition of value (i.e. the value of the good or service is whatever the market will pay for it) and deeply rooted cultural presumptions about the value of women's labour within and outside the home. A solution to this problem is to place economic resources directly into the hands of individual women.

12. The application of the comparable worth approach might be the basis for a fundamental transformation of women's lives by enhancing women's capacity to support themselves and their dependants in a time of deepening female poverty. Women's economic autonomy is important because of the threat of poverty, which affects women more severely than men. Economic independence could also allow women to make life choices (education, work, marriage) more freely and increase social recognition of occupations where women predominate. Implicit is the recognition that the ability to support oneself independently is the foundation for full citizenship and participation in the larger community, and that political rights have little meaning unless women have the resources to act independently and to shoulder their share of communal responsibilities. In that sense the policy of comparable worth is a new policy initiative, which suggests deeper democratic impulses and acknowledges the principle of equal participation.

13. The problem of implementation of the principle of equal pay for work of equal value is aggravated by the fact that most of the female labour force is found in the informal sector, especially in developing countries. For example, for sub-Saharan Africa, the urban informal sector generally accounts for almost all of the urban labour force. The informal sector is not covered by labour regulations and the usual legal prescriptions for reducing gender pay differentials are irrelevant for the informal sector either on a de jure basis (by definition) or a de facto basis (due to poor enforcement, as for example, for domestic servants). It does not mean that the underlying rationale of the equal pay for work of equal value concept has to be abandoned for the informal sector.

14. In dealing with the informal sector, certain methodological issues require consideration. First, the informal sector needs to be defined and then subdivided into meaningful subsectors (e.g. by occupation, industry, agriculture and perhaps by enterprise size) so that targeted programmes and policies can be made effective. It is clearly insufficient to speak of the informal sector as if it was homogeneous. Valuable and important conclusions on definitions for

the informal sector are available from the recent Fifteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians held in January 1993. Second, female workers in the informal sector need to be identified. This raises major methodological issues of measurement, since women in the informal sector are often "missed" by typical household and labour force surveys and informal sector establishments are always missed by typical establishment surveys. Third, it is important to measure hours worked, since informal sector work is frequently irregular and less than full time in nature and income levels. In order to look at pay and income differentials for informal sector work, variations in work time should be taken into account. Fourth, it is necessary to measure the income of self-employed persons, since a high percentage of informal sector workers are self-employed.

15. The efficient implementation of equal pay for work of equal value also requires the consideration of the role of the State in enforcing the principle. This involves an examination of the relationship between state regulation and the private sector in terms of the extent to which the state policy can and should interfere with market mechanisms. A particular consideration would be regulation of the informal sector. However, while the introduction of formal regulations could be important, their practical effect would depend on employers' and workers' organizations ensuring their implementation. Thus, in addition to developing a national legislative framework, a collective bargaining process should take place.

B. Development: women in urban areas: population, nutrition and health factors for women in development, including migration, drug consumption and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome

16. The issue of women in urban areas has in its widest sense only recently been given attention. In the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, the question of rural women is placed under the heading of development ("Food, water and agriculture") and receives 14 paragraphs whereas the question of urban women is placed under areas of special concern and only two paragraphs are devoted to "poor urban women". The issue is becoming important for many reasons, not the least of which is a significant demographic shift. The per cent of population in developing countries living in urban areas was estimated at 33.6 per cent in 1990 and is projected by the United Nations to reach 53 per cent by the year 2020. Out of the current 20 world megacities, 14, each sheltering more than 8 million people, are located in the developing countries.

17. Although many studies exist on cities and on urban processes, the situation of women in urban areas and the application of a gender participation to urban issues have received less attention. Urban planning has either not been concerned with women's issues or has assumed that urban processes were gender-neutral. In the past few years, however, a "feminist" geography has emerged that has begun studying the issue and an awareness has emerged that women have specific problems within the process of urbanization.

18. Changes in the size, structure and composition of urban populations are closely related to the patterns of migration in general. It is important to determine the ways in which this affects the distribution of roles in various

households and, in particular, the impact of migration on women's opportunities in the area of gainful employment, their access to infrastructure and services as well as health and nutrition. In each migration pattern, whether it is male-dominated, female-dominated or associated, human reproduction is ensured in a specific way. Determining how this function is affected by the different migration patterns is an important step in designing urbanization policies.

19. A major factor in the rural-urban shift in population is the real or perceived disparities between urban and rural areas in economic opportunities and in social and cultural amenities. In fact, migration may not be fully justified by economic developments in the city. Rural migrants move to the cities not because of assured availability of jobs but rather in expectation of them. The relationship between rural-urban migration and socio-economic development has become an increasing concern of planners and policy makers.

20. The analysis of this priority theme will take into account the fact that rural and urban women often face similar problems, but that the impossibility of satisfying basic needs and rights in rural areas frequently is a major reason for migration into the cities. Indeed, the situation in the rural areas might indicate the pattern and intensity of migration. Issues of jobs, housing, schools, health and related services have to be linked to the extent of migration and the characteristics of migrants.

21. Population movements from poorer countries to more developed ones also lead to social and economic problems. International migration is affected by the level of development of the sending and receiving countries and is related to the respective employment structures. In dealing with this type of migration, policy makers should take into account these structural factors.

22. A three-stage urbanization process can be seen - from urbanization to sub-urbanization to deconcentration, which is clearly linked to structural changes in the economy. Thus, the transition from urban concentration to sub-urbanization is associated with industrialization, and the transition to deconcentration is related to rapid growth of employment in the non-industrial sectors. In the early stage of urbanization, fertility often remains high because of the critical child-bearing age of the migrants and their "traditional" high fertility rate of rural areas, and then decreases as does the fertility of later migrants. Most of the developing countries are still in the first stage, that of concentration, with high fertility. Indeed, the contribution of migrants to urban growth is greater than would appear from their numbers alone since most female migrants are of child-bearing age.

23. National urbanization policies that have emphasized industrial development have tended to result in unplanned urbanization where market forces have been allowed to determine the urban structure of the country. Primate cities (single cities that absorb most of the urban population of the country) emerged at first, containing an overwhelming majority of industries and led to inter- and intra-regional disparities in development. Secondary cities then emerged in the periphery of the big cities, serving as a base for local and primate cities' entrepreneurs to expand production for local demand. The development policies of primate (or mega) and secondary (or intermediate) cities may have a great influence on the urbanization process. A demographic and economic primacy is

often observed in megacities that attract more business because of the easier access to international markets and to communication networks.

24. There is a close interrelationship between these urbanization processes and gender. Gender relates to different characteristics of migration, including pattern, rate and type. Sound policy development requires the examination of how urbanization influences gender relations in areas such as access to employment, income and services and how it affects women's rights to property ownership, adequate shelter, health and nutrition. It is also necessary to examine the possible impact of gender on urbanization. A question might be the extent to which women, through their social and economic reproductive functions, compensate for insufficient public and private services in urban areas and the cost of this to them and to development.

25. It should be noted that the traditional sexual division of labour is reflected in the fact that when women are involved in reproductive activities or work in the informal sector, their work is not accounted for in economic or income terms. Moreover, access to services is de facto often gender-specific: health and day care, education, housing, and utilities such as water, electricity, heating oil often require hours of women's time daily because of their distant location. Owing to inadequate transport facilities and the fact that the urban labour market is often located far away from dwellings, women have greater difficulty than men in participating in the labour force.

26. Since child care is traditionally a woman's responsibility, gender differentiation is evident in the form and scale of men's and women's population movements, in the incomes and the level of risk in jobs taken by men and women in urban areas. Migrant women's employment is often characterized by informal work situations: the employer-employee relationships are regulated through social, kin and family arrangements. Although women have access to work and income, their upward social mobility is de facto limited and thus tends to increase women's dependency and thereby their economic vulnerability. In the context of high unemployment, women's often low level of education and professional training confines them to low-income occupations or to the informal sector where they can combine their jobs with reproductive and household work. Moreover, women are often engaged as unpaid family workers especially in domestic service, which may be seen as an extension of their traditional role. It is becoming common for companies and multinationals to sub-contract work for home production. This type of work, often badly paid under dangerous working conditions, is most frequently carried out by women.

27. Each phase of what could be called the mobility transition may be characterized by a gender dimension that is found in different types of mobility. One important factor influencing the gender composition of the flow of migrants is whether subsistence activities are carried out mainly by males or females in the communities of origin. Particular risks may vary by age, sex and other relevant factors, as well as by numerous mechanisms and interrelations between rural and urban areas, or in urban areas themselves. Special attention should be given for workers at export processing zones, who are mostly women under 30 years of age.

28. The resulting health pattern includes incidence of infectious diseases and malnutrition, as well as a worrying proportion of diseases due to maladjustment,

forced sexual exploitation, alcohol and drug abuse, and crime. It should be also stressed that a strong association between urbanization and human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection that has been found is compounded by mobility. For example, according to one study in southern Africa, HIV infection was found to be approximately three times more common among those who had changed their place of residence within 12 months. Over and above this association, the correlation between male-dominated oscillatory migration pattern (from rural to urban for work and from urban to rural to return home) and HIV transmission to women has become an urgent problem.

29. The most vulnerable of at-risk groups are found in non-planned growing cities. Women are particularly vulnerable to environmental hazards. Some are a result of their role in child-bearing and others are linked to the particular socially determined tasks and roles they undertake. Thus, women may run a persistent risk of unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases and HIV infection in their search of male support, and may tend to neglect their own health; the socio-cultural factors influencing the maternal mortality rate (the highest being in Africa: 640 out of 100,000) should be taken into consideration as those factors may be increased by an unplanned urbanization process. Governments faced with significant external debt have found it necessary to implement adjustment measures that can affect poorer urban populations and thus increase the vulnerability of this at-risk group. One policy issue is the desirability of stressing accessibility to health-care centres in order to facilitate consultations for working women and their children, with a view to location (proximity to the household) and opening hours.

30. As regards nutrition, one implication of the actual rate of urban growth is significant. To maintain merely the current standard of living, which is recognized as often inadequate, the availability of all goods and services will have to double since the urban population will itself double.

31. The recent surge in urbanization has dramatically altered the needs of the cities and has brought to the forefront the need to investigate systematically the process of migrant adjustment in cities. In addition modern towns and cities now pose a challenge to environmental sustainability: while they produce little, they have become great consumers.

32. In order to apply the concern of human reproduction to urban planning, research should determine how current urban planning takes into account gender relations and the impact thereof on the status of women and on their possibilities of advancement. Human reproduction has to be understood both at the level of the household and at the macro-level where collective social values and development approaches are shaped. It might be useful to consider some activities directly aimed at ensuring the survival of the household, such as certain informal sector activities often carried out by women, as being part of human reproduction. Thus, human reproduction would also include activities usually regarded as economic.

33. These issues will be considered at a seminar to be held in November 1993, which will review the current policies in the field of urbanization in order to see how the numerous parameters of the urbanization process are addressed. Decisions that would favour a certain type of urbanization can affect development policies in the urban sector in regard both to the physical

components of land and shelter and the social service sectors such as education, training and employment generation, as well as the types of production, which are essentially concentrated in a few primate cities and often linked to migration patterns.

C. Peace: measures to eradicate violence against women in family and society

34. The problem of violence has become increasingly visible over recent years, particularly because of work done by women at the local level and partly because of action taken at the international level. Considerable research has been undertaken and documentation prepared on the subject. Work has tended to focus on domestic violence, emphasizing a diagnosis of the extent and causes of the problem. There has, however, been a growing realization that any form of violence impedes the advancement of women and that domestic violence is only one aspect of a broader question of violence perpetrated against women. During the World Conferences on Women held at Mexico City and Copenhagen in 1975 and 1980, followed by work of the Commission on the Status of Women and later at the Nairobi Conference, held in 1985, the problem was gradually identified and given greater priority as one having international importance.

35. In 1988, at the thirty-second session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the issue of violence against women in the family and society was a priority theme under the rubric of peace. An Expert Group Meeting on Violence in the Family with Special Emphasis on its Effects on Women, held in December 1986, examined domestic violence in its various aspects in order to obtain a better understanding of the causes, nature and effects of such violence and coercion perpetrated within the family. The meeting concentrated on methods of crisis intervention and assistance available to the victims of domestic violence. Similarly, the recommendations were mainly addressed in respect to domestic violence.

36. The first review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies in 1990 revealed the need to tackle the problem of violence against women with more breadth (see Council resolution 1990/15, annex, para. 23, recommendation XXII). It recognized that violence against women in the family and society was pervasive and cut across lines of income, class and culture and must be matched by urgent and effective steps to eliminate its incidence. It was recommended that Governments should take immediate measures to establish appropriate penalties for violence against women in the family, the work place and society. Governments and other relevant agencies should also undertake policies to prevent, control and reduce the impact of violence on women in the family, the work place and society. Governments and relevant agencies, women's organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector should develop appropriate correctional, educational and social services, including shelters, training programmes for law enforcement officers, the judiciary and health and social service personnel, as well as adequate deterrent and corrective measures. The number of women at all levels of law enforcement, legal assistance and the judicial system should be increased.

37. Subsequently, given an increasing recognition that violence against women is an obstacle for the advancement of women and considered as a human rights

abuse, the Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1991/18, adopted upon the recommendation of the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-fifth session, recommended the elaboration of an international instrument to combat the problem of violence against women. A draft declaration on violence against women was recommended by the Commission and transmitted by the Council in its resolution 1993/10 to the General Assembly for adoption. The draft declaration affirms that violence against women is a human rights violation that degrades women and impairs their full development and participation in society. It also sets out the types of acts that are covered by the term violence against women.

38. The World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, adopted a Declaration and Programme of Action, which deal with a wide range of issues and principles concerning human rights. They stress the importance of working towards elimination of violence against women in public and private life and the elimination of all forms of sexual harassment, exploitation and trafficking in women. The Conference called upon the General Assembly to adopt the draft declaration on violence against women and urged States to combat violence against women with its provisions.

39. A number of countries have made the eradication of violence against women a priority in their programmes by implementing policies aimed at its elimination. Certain developed countries have extended financial assistance to women's programmes within the United Nations system for their efforts in combating the practice of violence and redressing the situation of the victims. Studies on violence against women in many developed countries have led to the elaboration and implementation by Governments of policies and programmes dealing extensively with domestic violence and rape as the most well-known types of violence perpetrated against women.

40. Among the many types of violence perpetrated against women because they are women are rape, incest, genital mutilation, female infanticide, dowry murder, and other sex-related crimes. Some of these types of violence are considered a crime, while others are not considered crimes or otherwise go unpunished by law in certain societies. Even when prohibited by law, some types of violence are considered to be justified or defensible on the basis of custom.

41. Policies to deal with violence against women have generally been limited to the national level. However, some types of violence have taken on an international dimension as in the recent case of the systematic mass rape of women during specific situations of armed conflict, where concerted action at the international level was called for. The plight of these women calls for action to penalize the crime and to compensate the victims and for a new emphasis to be placed on the violation of human rights and the implementation of women's rights as human rights.

42. Other forms of violence are often not considered as such. Although the physical effects of such forms of violence are not visible or may even not be considered as violence, their real effects on women can be as oppressive as the others. Systematic use of the threat of violence, including threat of injury or death to women or to their children, often becomes a powerful weapon of oppression. Women are subject to such threats in their private lives, but also to more subtle forms of oppression and harassment in public and institutional

settings. The inequality of women both at home and at work make them susceptible to this form of psychological violence.

43. In addition, acts of violence against women can be seen as a continuum from violent behaviour that has been accepted culturally and traditionally through some that have been tolerated, if not accepted (e.g. sexual harassment in work places, beating women in the home, some forms of trafficking), to those forms that have been found intolerable (e.g. incest, rape, murder and extreme forms of trafficking).

44. Violence against women has often been considered an individual problem rather than a matter of public concern, although the roots are often found in the social, cultural, historical and political context of societies that have condoned aggressive behaviour of males. This has often led to blaming women, either openly or by implication, for the violence perpetrated against them, making them somehow responsible for provoking violent actions by men. Provocation, for example, has been used as a defense in cases of murder. As a consequence, women may be unwilling to allow prosecution of a violent act or crime. Submissive behaviour of women can be related to the unequal power relationship between men and women, and eradicating violence requires addressing underlying gender inequality.

45. Non-governmental organizations and other women's groups have joined forces to combat the problem, seeking out the means available within their own countries. This has led to action such as establishing centres to assist battered and abused women, providing shelters for rape victims and organizing campaigns to recognize the problem at all levels. However, such actions have tended to focus on the consequences of violence rather than its causes.

46. In order to explore the subject further, as mandated by the Commission on the Status of Women, an expert group meeting will be held from 4 to 8 October 1993 in cooperation with the Center for Women's Global Leadership of Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey, United States of America. The meeting will examine the types of violence affecting women in the family and in the community in order to propose appropriate measures to eliminate the problem. The forms of violence enumerated in the draft declaration on the elimination of violence against women will be a focus, and the nature of each and the measures that have proven most adequate to prevent or eliminate each type of violence will be examined.

47. The measures proposed will be based on an assessment of the social and legal implications of the phenomenon, its effects on the life of the victims and their families and any inconsistencies between law and practice. The meeting should elaborate recommendations to protect victims through appropriate treatment for prevention and rehabilitation.

48. The meeting is expected to consider the types of sanctions that might be applied to perpetrators, taking into consideration the type of punishment applied currently. It should reveal problems in dealing with each type of violence in terms of identifying acts, apprehending perpetrators and amassing evidence. It should include an examination of the appropriateness and severity of penalties in effect and any necessary changes. It should consider the relationship of the perpetrator with the victim as part of the determination of

responsibility in recommending measures. The responsibility of the state through its agents should also be reviewed.

49. Measures examined will include legislation applicable to all kinds of violence, for example, in the penal code, as well as special legislation on the administration of justice, the treatment of women victims, and the extent to which provisions of legislation, in practice, cover counselling, legal advice, and protection. Provisions for shelters and child care facilities, social security, adequate compensation of the danger suffered and any other type of assistance will be considered. Legal provisions on procedures followed for cases of violence, which would range from reporting the crime, police intervention to the sanctions and penalties imposed after appropriate hearing, will also be considered.

50. The expert group meeting will also examine the use of the education and training to prevent each type of violence on the grounds that prevention is a less costly alternative. These measures could include education about violence at early stages in school, including the elimination of abusive behaviour in classes, and counselling for young women who, at a very early stage in their lives, have been the victims of an abusive relationship.

51. Recommendations on training and education from the expert group meeting could be addressed to law enforcement agents, prosecutors, judges and other court personnel dealing with women victims of violence. For example, misinformation about the nature of violence directed at women and erroneous personal beliefs about the victims may be obstacles to achieve equal treatment under the law, especially when these beliefs are held by law enforcement or judicial personnel.

52. Finally, measures to increase public awareness about violence against women, their civil rights and protection through law enforcement will be examined. The role of the mass media in preventing violence will be considered.

III. IMPLEMENTATION OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION 47/95 ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

A. Cooperation by the organizations of the United Nations system with the Commission on the Status of Women on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies

53. In paragraph 5 of its resolution 47/95, the General Assembly urged all relevant bodies of the United Nations system to cooperate with the Commission on the Status of Women in its task of promoting the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. In paragraph 15 of the resolution, the Assembly strongly urged that particular attention be given by the relevant United Nations organizations and Governments to the special needs of women with disabilities, to elderly women and also to women in vulnerable situations such as migrant and refugee women and children. In paragraph 18, organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations are urged to ensure active participation of women in the planning and implementation of programmes for sustainable development.

54. The 17th Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on Women was convened prior to the thirty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women. Representatives of 28 organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system were present. Discussions centred on preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, in particular the review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and the Platform for Action. A joint statement on the Platform for Action for the Conference was prepared and delivered at the thirty-seventh session of the Commission. It was suggested that the Platform for Action should identify actions to respond to the practical needs of the majority of women and be scaled in short-, medium- and long-term plans according to the specific priorities of countries. Practical imperatives such as legal rights, access to education and health programmes were identified. Development and analysis of statistics, mobilization of people and of public and private resources were suggested as the mechanisms for achieving strategic goals. The Meeting also called for the strengthening of accountability systems for the integration of women in development.

55. The meeting expressed the need for a comprehensive information strategy. It would be critical to reach the grass roots and mobilize mass media, make optimum use of modern technology and use and strengthen all existing networks, if the Conference were to be effective.

56. The preliminary draft of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women was critically reviewed. The meeting recommended that the United Nations system should consider an approach to allow a more dynamic and flexible system-wide planning with a shorter time period. A planning exercise of a more adjustable character would respond to the new tasks being given to organizations of the United Nations system.

B. Contributions to forthcoming major international conferences

57. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 47/95, the Assembly requested the Commission, when considering the priority theme relating to development during its thirty-seventh and subsequent sessions, to ensure its early contribution to the preparatory work of forthcoming major international conferences such as the World Conference on Human Rights, held in 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development, to be held in 1994, the World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held in 1995, and the World Summit on Social Development, to be held in 1995, and to address the impact of technologies on women.

58. During its thirty-seventh session, the Commission established an open-ended working group to consider its contributions to the World Conference on Human Rights. On the basis of its deliberations, the Commission adopted resolution 37/4 (see E/1993/27, chap. I, sect. C), in which it recommended that the valuable work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the relationship between the Committee and the Commission on the Status of Women should be recognized. The coordination and cooperation between the Commission on Human Rights and the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other human rights treaty bodies and national machinery should be improved.

The appointment of a special rapporteur on violence against women should be considered by the Commission on Human Rights.

59. In its draft resolution VI, subsequently adopted by the Economic and Social Council as resolution 1993/14, the Commission welcomed suggestion 4 adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (see A/48/38). In that suggestion the Committee recommended that the World Conference on Human Rights should suggest that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women be placed on the same footing as other human rights conventions as regards the servicing and adequate meeting time of its treaty body and examination of the possibility of adding an optional protocol. The Committee also reaffirmed that the denial of political, economic, social and cultural rights and the negative effects of structural adjustment programmes in many countries have had an adverse impact on women. It recommended that States should encourage the development of policies so that women be protected from human rights violations in situations of civil strife and that States should prevent and respond to abuses against women in situations of international or non-international armed conflict. Participation of women in the process of mediation and settlement of such conflicts should be ensured.

60. The work of the Commission and the Committee formed an input to the World Conference on Human Rights, Declaration and Programme of Action of which highlight the importance of efforts undertaken by the United Nations to promote equal rights of men and women as proclaimed in its Charter and the importance of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, calling for its universal ratification by the year 2000 and urging States to withdraw reservations that ran counter to its purposes.

61. The Conference underlined the importance of the integration and full participation of women as both agents and beneficiaries in the development process, and reiterated the objectives established on global action for women towards sustainable and equitable development set forth in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and in Agenda 21. The Conference agreed that equal status and human rights of women should be integrated into the mainstream of United Nations system-wide activity.

62. As noted above, the Commission will deal with population issues in its priority theme under the rubric of development at its session in 1994. The discussion will draw on the results of a series of expert group meetings convened for the International Conference on Population and Development that have gender dimensions. The results of the Commission's deliberations on the theme will be available for the International Conference on Population and Development.

63. During preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, a link will be established to other major international events planned for 1995 including the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and the World Summit for Social Development. Interrelated themes such as the role of women in global governance, democracy and social and economic development will be introduced on the agenda of all events.

C. Methods of compilation and data collection

64. In paragraph 11 of its resolution 47/95, the General Assembly recommended the further development of methods of compilation and data collection in areas of concern identified by the Commission and urged Member States to improve and broaden collection of gender-disaggregated statistical information and make it available to the relevant bodies of the United Nations system with a view to preparing, in all official languages, as a background document for the Fourth World Conference on Women, an updated edition of The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics. 2/

65. With the help of several Member States, the United Nations and the specialized agencies have developed or are in the process of developing concepts, methods and procedures in order to improve the coverage of women's activities and concerns in economic statistics of the labour force, national accounts and the informal sector, pursuant in particular to paragraph 120 of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. The Statistical Division published in 1993 a technical report entitled Methods of Measuring Women's Economic Activity, which presents data tabulation programmes for use in established population censuses and household surveys to highlight women's role in economic activity.

66. Taking into account many requests from countries for assistance in developing comparable databases and reports, the Statistical Division, in cooperation with the Joint Consultative Group on Policy and several interested bilateral agencies, has prepared a manual on methods for compiling and organizing statistics on gender issues. The manual will be used in regional and sub-regional training activities such as a training workshop for focal points on gender statistics in East, Central and Southern Africa, sponsored by statistical offices in Sweden, the United Republic of Tanzania and Botswana. Assistance will be also provided to several countries in preparation of statistical national books.

67. The Statistical Division has also continued to cooperate with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women and the inter-secretariat working group on national accounts to ensure that methodological issues affecting the equitable measurement of women's work in the System of National Accounts (SNA) are taken into account in the SNA revision.

68. In the area of compilation and dissemination, work continues to concentrate on the Women's Indicators and Statistical Database and the second edition of The World's Women. The database, which has been established with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), provides a comprehensive set of internationally available gender-based statistics in a single, comprehensive and well-documented source. The complete Users Manual for version 2 of the database was issued in 1992; version 3, which will incorporate substantial new "user-friendly" software, as well as new data and information, is to be issued in late 1994. Work on its development is done in close complementarity with the preparation of the next edition of The World's Women. This new edition will maintain the basic structure, and the emphasis will be made on improving the data, especially on filling the existing gaps. The regional commissions will play an active role in providing the new data. New topics of the book will include data and information on violence against women, women and communication

and the role of women in the 50 years history of the United Nations, including participation in peace-keeping activities.

D. Women in vulnerable situations, including migrant women workers

69. In its resolution 47/96 of 16 December 1992, the General Assembly expressed concern about violence against migrant women workers, in particular the large numbers of women migrating from developing countries to more affluent countries, noted with concern the mounting reports of grave abuses and acts of violence committed against the person of women migrant workers, called upon all countries, particularly the sending and receiving countries, to cooperate in taking appropriate steps to ensure that the rights of women migrant workers are protected, and requested the Secretary-General to make a preliminary oral report, through the Commission on the Status of Women and the Economic and Social Council, to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session on the implementation of the resolution.

70. The issue of migrant women, including migrant women workers, had been dealt with by the Commission at its thirty-fifth session in 1991 in its discussion of the priority theme under the rubric of equality. It adopted resolution 35/6, in which it encouraged Member States to establish or strengthen appropriate services dealing with questions on the international migration of workers and members of their families, in particular in the formulation and implementation of policies regarding the migration of women and the provision of information and assistance to women migrant workers, requested the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other appropriate associations of and for migrant women to assist in disseminating among migrant women information on their legal, social and economic rights and obligations, to provide counselling services, to identify problems and to cooperate with decision makers, and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session under the priority theme of development on the implementation of the resolution and on the International Convention of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (General Assembly resolution 45/158, annex) as far as women migrants are concerned.

71. A minimum protection for vulnerable female migrants would be ensured by the ratification of international labour standards concerning migrant workers by migrant-sending and -receiving States. ILO Conventions such as Nos. 97, 143, 118 and 157, though not specifically addressing the issue of female migration, might provide guarantees of their basic rights.

72. As requested in the resolution, Member States and organizations of the United Nations system were asked for information about the situation of migrant women workers. As at 1 August 1993, a number of States and organizations had provided information. An oral report was presented to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-seventh session in March and to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session in July. An oral report will be presented to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

E. Women in development, in particular rural women

73. In paragraph 7 of its resolution 47/95, the General Assembly asked the Commission to give special attention to women in developing countries, particularly in Africa and in least developed countries, who suffer disproportionately from the effects of the global economic crisis and the heavy external debt burden, and to recommend further measures for the equalization of opportunity and for integration of these women into the development process when considering the priority theme relating to development. At its thirty-seventh session, the Commission considered, as a priority theme under the rubric of development, "women in extreme poverty: integration of women's concerns in national development planning". The attention of the Commission was drawn to the conclusions of an expert group meeting held in Vienna on this issue in November 1991 (see E/CN.6/1993/3, annex). The meeting had examined factors leading to the creation of a relatively higher incidence of poverty among women and the roles of the State, market and community in combating poverty.

74. In its resolution 37/6 (E/1993/27, chap. I, sect. C), the Commission urged Governments to foster the access of women to income-generating activities as a means of stimulating economic independence, a basic requirement for women's self-sufficiency, requested Member States to make provision for specific training programmes for women in rural and urban areas aimed at developing their technical and management skills and to give financial support, fellowships or both for training women, particularly those from developing countries, in science, technology, agriculture and management, called upon Governments, donor countries and relevant international organizations to take further coordinated measures to facilitate the access of women, particularly rural and urban poor women, to basic education and health and child-care facilities, and requested the Secretary-General, in reporting on the implementation of the resolution in his biennial report on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, to include policy and programme recommendations on the basis of gender analysis and to ensure that the issue of women and development and of the integration of women in development programmes are an integral part of the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

75. In its resolution 44/78 of 8 December 1989, the General Assembly had requested the Secretary-General to prepare, in consultation with the Member States, a report on the improvement of the status of women in rural areas and submit it to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session, through the Economic and Social Council. The requested report (A/48/187-E/1993/76) is before the Assembly.

F. Women in public life and international decision-making

76. In paragraph 12 of its resolution 47/95, the General Assembly emphasized, in the framework of the Forward-looking Strategies, the importance of the total integration of women in the development process, bearing in mind the specific and urgent needs of the developing countries, and called upon Member States to establish specific targets at each level in order to increase the participation of women in professional, management and decision-making positions in their countries.

77. The Commission, at its thirty-seventh session, considered under the objective of peace the priority theme of "women and the peace process". It had before it a report by the Secretary-General (E/CN.6/1993/4), in which it was noted that women are virtually absent from the peace process at the official level. The role of women in the peace process both through non-governmental channels and in the military was examined. The relationship between the low participation of women in public life and decision-making at the national level and the lack of women in the peace process at the international level was stressed. It was suggested that the role of women in the resolution of armed conflicts should be studied in more detail. The participation of women in all decision-making levels in order to preserve peace was important.

G. System-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women

78. In paragraph 19 of its resolution 47/95, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in formulating the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women for the period 1996-2001 and in integrating the Forward-looking Strategies into activities mandated by the Assembly, to pay particular attention to specific sectoral themes that cut across the three objectives, equality, development and peace, and include, in particular, literacy, education, health, population, the impact of technology on the environment and its effect on women and the full participation of women in decision-making, and to continue to assist Governments in strengthening their national machineries for the advancement of women.

79. At its thirty-seventh session, the Commission on the Status of Women provided comments on the draft of the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, which was made available to the Administrative Committee on Coordination. The plan (see E/1993/43) is composed of 26 subprogrammes, organized into seven programme areas and three parts, the first describing strategies in terms of substantive areas, the second focusing on the means of improving international action and the third seeking to synthesize and coordinate the specific activities of the system-wide medium-term plan with particular reference to women in development and the strengthening of national machineries for the advancement of women. The medium-term plan is a form of indicative operational planning, defining ways in which the goals set by the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies may be met.

80. In its resolution 37/1, the Commission recommended that the system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women should be revised after the Platform for Action and the second review and appraisal on the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies were formulated and adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. It also recommended that any revised system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women be more concise, take account of the changes in the United Nations planning cycle, take a more strategic approach highlighting policy implications, and include more substantial strategies, time-frames, concrete measures, resources and allocation of responsibility for implementation.

81. In its resolution 1993/16, the Economic and Social Council endorsed the plan as a general framework for the coordination of system-wide efforts and requested the Secretary-General to arrange for a revision of the plan following

the Fourth World Conference on Women, taking into account the suggestions made by the Commission.

H. Women in the Secretariat

82. In its resolution 47/226 of 8 April 1993, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to accord high priority to the recruitment and promotion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution in order to achieve the goals set out in Assembly resolution 45/239 C of 21 December 1990, which called for an overall participation rate of 35 per cent by 1995 and 25 per cent in posts at the D-1 level and above by 1995.

83. In paragraph 21 of its resolution 47/95, the General Assembly requested Governments, when presenting candidatures for vacancies in the Secretariat, in particular at the decision-making level, to give priority to women's candidatures, and requested the Secretary-General in reviewing those candidatures to give special consideration to female candidates from underrepresented and unrepresented developing countries.

84. As at 31 December 1992, women numbered 798, which constitute 30.7 per cent, in posts subject to geographical distribution. As of mid-1993, this percentage share has climbed to 31.1. There were 39 women at the D-1 level and above, which accounts for 10.4 per cent share of the posts at these levels. In his November 1992 statement to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly the Secretary-General said that he intended to do all he could to bring the balance in policy-level positions as close to parity as possible by 1995.

85. Special measures are in place to increase the numbers of women and recruitment procedures will ensure that in departments and offices with less than 35 per cent women overall and in those with less than 25 per cent women at levels P-5 and above, vacancies are filled by women who meet the requirements of the post. There are two exceptions to this. One is when a post has been vacant for 12 months and despite efforts of all concerned no woman has been found and the other, when a post is being filled through a competitive examination.

IV. PREPARATIONS FOR THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN: ACTION FOR EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

86. Since the adoption of resolution 47/95, preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women: Action for Equality, Development and Peace, to be held at Beijing in 1995, have continued at an increased pace within the Secretariat and at the national, regional and international levels.

87. The success of the Conference and its impact upon the global agenda now and into the twenty-first century depend critically on the quality of the preparatory process, on a comprehensive and in-depth approach to the issues that influence women's lives, and on the ability to reach out and bring in the voices of the women at the grass-roots. The process of consensus building around the Conference is expected to start now at the national level and pass through the regional level before arriving at the Conference.

A. Secretariat

88. The Secretary-General of the United Nations has appointed Mrs. Gertrude Mongella of the United Republic of Tanzania as Secretary-General of the Conference, taking into account section A, paragraph 6, of Commission on the Status of Women resolution 36/8. In accordance with the restructuring of the Secretariat in the economic, social and related fields, the Division for the Advancement of Women, as the core secretariat of the Conference, augmented by posts provided specifically for the Conference, is now part of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development.

89. The Secretary-General of the Conference has taken the following steps to increase awareness about the Conference and to encourage Conference preparations at all levels:

(a) A steering committee has been established at the Secretariat level to plan and coordinate all technical, administrative, logistical and financial aspects of the Conference, which includes representatives of all relevant offices of the Secretariat;

(b) The Secretary-General has undertaken the following missions:

(i) Twenty-eighth session of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and 19th meeting of the Conference of African Ministers responsible for Economic Development and Planning, held at Addis Ababa in May;

(ii) Expert group meeting of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) on women in development, held in Paris on 10 and 11 May;

(iii) First planning mission to the host country of the Conference, 1-6 June;

(iv) Visit to the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, on 8 June, to review the current status of Conference preparations at regional level and for the forthcoming NGO symposium (16-20 November 1993, Manila, Philippines);

(v) World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 19 June;

(vi) Visit to Rome from 20 to 22 July to discuss Conference preparations with representatives of the Government of Italy and organizations of the United Nations system;

(vii) Organization of African Unity Summit, held at Cairo from 23 June to 1 July;

(c) Consultations with non-governmental organizations in the promotion of women's equality, development and peace and to encourage Conference preparations at the national and regional levels.

B. Inter-agency coordination and cooperation

90. The Secretary-General of the Conference has established an ad hoc inter-agency advisory committee on the Conference in order to set up a structure for channeling advice and for ensuring coordination of Conference preparations, as a complement to the normal inter-agency coordination structure. The inter-agency committee meets at least once every three months, and on an ad hoc basis, as necessary.

91. In addition, the various organizations of the United Nations system have initiated activities in preparation for the Conference in their respective areas at all levels. These will be reported in detail to the Commission on the Status of Women at its next session.

C. Fund raising efforts

92. Pursuant to Commission on the Status of Women resolution 36/8, section D, a Trust Fund for preparatory activities for the Conference has been established. Contributions to the Trust Fund are being encouraged from Member States and other donors.

93. Extrabudgetary resources are being sought for five main purposes:

(a) Support for the Conference secretariat, for additional experts on a short-term basis, for the convening of expert group meetings, seminars and round tables, and for Conference-related staff travel;

(b) Support for national level preparatory activities and, in particular, for national committees in report preparation;

(c) Support for regional level preparatory activities, in particular, to strengthen the capacities of the regional commissions for Conference preparations;

(d) Support for the participation of representatives of developing countries, especially least developed countries, in regional meetings and in the Conference;

(e) Support for participation of non-governmental organizations from developing countries.

94. To date a total of 10 Governments have contributed or pledged their support to the Trust Fund. One grant has been received from a foundation, and another from an NGO. A number of other Governments have indicated interest in contributing to Conference preparations. Discussions are also under way with other interested international funding institutions and non-governmental organizations.

95. The OECD/DAC expert group on women in development has established a Facilitation Initiative for Conference preparations in order to coordinate members' support to developing countries in their preparations for the Conference and to ensure an equitable spread and optimal use of scarce human and

financial resources. Through the Facilitation Initiative, a number of members would act as lead donors for specific regions. The Conference secretariat is in close contact with the OECD/DAC expert group on women in development.

D. National level preparations

96. In section B, paragraph 1 of resolution 36/8, the Commission on the Status of Women recommended that Governments establish a national committee or designate a national focal point to initiate and promote preparations for the Conference. These committees or focal points would organize and coordinate national activities, including assembling information and gender-disaggregated statistics for the elaboration of national reports on the situation of women, and increasing public awareness about the Conference. In a note verbale dated 12 August 1992, the Secretary-General informed all Member States of the contents of the resolution and invited them to inform the Division for the Advancement of Women about the establishment of national committees or the designation of focal points. The Commission, in section I of resolution 37/7, noted with concern that only a few Governments had established national committees or designated national focal points, and urged all Governments to do so without delay. As of 15 August 1993, a total of 22 Governments have provided relevant information to the secretariat.

E. Second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women

97. By its resolution 36/8, the Commission decided that the agenda of the Conference should include the second review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies.

98. At its thirty-seventh session the Commission discussed the role of the second review and appraisal of the Strategies, which would be important both as an element in the preparatory process for the Conference and as a means for speeding up the unfinished work of implementing the Strategies by the year 2000. The preparatory process in general and the preparation of the national report in particular should therefore be seen as an opportunity for a national self-examination, to gather the facts, assess the obstacles, and identify priorities for concrete immediate and long-term action. The participation of society at large in this process is recommended.

99. The Commission requested the secretariat to prepare a list of the most significant indicators on the basis of the critical areas of concern identified in the structure of the Platform for Action. These indicators were sent out by the secretariat in September 1993. The use of statistical indicators is seen as a means to promote a more rigorous review of the implementation of the Strategies, since they are a vehicle for measuring, as far as possible, the changes that are occurring in the status of women. They are also a tool for ensuring that relevant data and statistics are collected. The indicators can provide an incentive to start collecting certain new data of relevance for policy-making. The conceptual and practical/financial difficulties of collecting data in a number of areas are acknowledged, particularly in those

countries where national machinery and statistical institutions are overburdened. A number of bilateral and multilateral donors have indicated their willingness to assist in the collection of data.

F. Regional level preparations

100. At the regional level, activities are initiated and coordinated by the regional commissions. In section IV, paragraph 1, of its resolution 37/7, the Commission urged Governments to initiate preparations for their national reports as soon as possible and to ensure that they are submitted to the regional conferences in time to serve as contributions to the regional review and appraisal of Strategies. The deadline for submission of national reports for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific region has been set for the end of November 1993. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia region has requested that the national reports be submitted by the end of December 1993. ECA has set a deadline of end of February 1994 for submission of national reports. No deadlines have yet been established by the Economic Commission for Europe and by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Each member state should submit a copy of its national report also to the Conference secretariat, where they will serve as input for the global review and appraisal of the implementation of the Strategies. The secretariat should have available all national reports no later than May 1994.

101. The Secretary-General of the Conference convened a meeting of the focal points of the regional commissions and of representatives of the host countries of the five regional preparatory conferences, which met from 9 to 11 August in New York, to discuss plans and perspectives for regional preparatory activities. The meeting took note of the workplans and timetables of the various regions and agreed on a set of conclusions that should ensure a smooth and well-coordinated preparatory process.

102. All regions will hold regional preparatory conferences, and plans are also under way for NGO events. A series of workshops, seminars, expert group meetings, as well as national and sub-regional events are planned to feed into these conferences. The following is a preliminary list of scheduled events for 1993 and 1994.

1993

ESCAP: 16-20 November, Regional NGO Symposium on Women in Development, Manila

ECA: October, Expert group meeting of national preparatory coordinators/ NGOs, Addis Ababa/Nairobi

1994

ECA: May, Expert group meeting to prepare draft African Platform for Action, Tunis

ESCAP: 7-14 June, Second Asian and Pacific Ministerial Conference on Women in Development, Jakarta

ESCWA: 4-8 September, Expert group meeting on women in development, Amman

ECLAC: 26-30 September, Regional Preparatory Conference, Buenos Aires

ESCWA: 6-10 November, Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Amman

ECE: October, Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women, Vienna

ECA: Mid-November, Fifth African Regional Conference on Women/African Regional Preparatory Conference, Dakar

103. To date, NGO forums have also been scheduled to take place prior to the African Regional Preparatory Conference and the Latin American and Caribbean Regional Preparatory Conference.

104. In addition, the Government of Uganda will host a Regional Conference on Women and Peace, to take place from 22 to 27 November 1993 in Kampala, Uganda. At the intergovernmental level, the Committee for Equality between Women and Men of the Council of Europe will hold a special meeting in 1994 devoted to preparations for the Conference. The Nordic Council of Ministers is planning a Nordic Forum to take place in Turku, Finland, from 1 to 6 August 1994.

G. Global level preparations

105. The Commission, as the preparatory body for the Conference, discussed at its thirty-seventh session a first draft to serve as a working document for the elaboration of the Platform for Action. The crucial importance of the Platform as the main document to emerge from the Conference was stressed. It should focus on the critical areas of concern that have been identified as representing a fundamental obstacle to the advancement of the majority of women. The document is expected to be action-oriented and concise and written in a language that is simple and easy to understand.

106. In its decision 1993/234 the Economic and Social Council decided that an inter-sessional working group of the Commission should be convened in January of 1994 further to develop the structure of the Platform for Action. In its resolution 37/7, section III, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to prepare, and to present to the Commission at its thirty-eighth session, a draft of the Platform for Action, following the structure and guidelines set out in the annex to the resolution and in the results of the inter-sessional working group. It requested national committees and focal points to initiate and promote preparations for the Conference and to take into account the critical areas of concern in the structure of the Platform when preparing the reports. It also requested the Secretary-General to bring the structure of the Platform for Action to the attention of the regional preparatory conferences so that they may take it into account in their deliberations.

107. In section VI of the same resolution, the Commission requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report for the Commission at its thirty-eighth session on institutional arrangements for the implementation of the Platform for

Action and for the programme on advancement of women and an appraisal of options for considering the agenda item at the Conference.

H. Preparations by non-governmental organizations

108. The NGO community convened a first NGO consultation in preparation for the 1995 NGO Forum immediately prior to the thirty-seventh session of the Commission.

109. A representative of the NGO Planning Committee for the 1995 NGO Forum participated in the first planning mission to the host country. For the NGO Forum, the Beijing Workers' Sports Service Centre, with a stadium seating capacity of 70,000 and a gymnasium with a seating capacity of 13,000, as well as meeting rooms and offices of various sizes, was considered to be adequate for the major activities of the Forum.

I. Public information

110. In paragraph 23 of its resolution 47/95, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide for the existing weekly radio programmes on women in the regular budget of the United Nations, making adequate provisions for broadcasts in different languages, and to develop the focal point for issues relating to women in the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, which, in concert with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, should provide a more effective public information programme relating to the advancement of women.

111. In its resolution 36/8 B, the Commission, acting as the preparatory body for the Fourth World Conference on Women, had requested the Secretary-General to plan and implement an information campaign for the Conference. The public information strategy and promotional activities now being planned include a focus on such priority themes as political power-sharing, women and poverty, and violence against women, in keeping with the official Conference theme: Action for Equality, Development and Peace. The campaign will feature analysis of progress made since 1985 in terms of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Information products will emphasize women's strengths, successes and contributions in the economic, political and social spheres, and will avoid characterizing women as victims. Particular attention will be given to the concerns of particularly important groups, such as girl children. The strategy includes the continuation of the weekly radio programmes in support of the Conference, as well as close cooperation between the Department of Public Information and the Division for the Advancement of Women.

112. Target audiences for promotion of the Conference will include media, NGOs, United Nations Associations, educational and cultural institutions, arts and entertainment communities, and intergovernmental and parliamentary bodies. Special efforts will be made to reach out to grass-roots communities, including poor, disadvantaged and other "marginalized" groups of women and people under the age of 35. Publications, radio and television programmes, exhibits and special events will be developed in cooperation with United Nations system and outside partners to ensure the broadest possible outreach.

Notes